If I started anthrax vaccinations, but had doses delayed, do I have to restart the series?

✓No, you will not have to restart the series. You will simply pick up where you left off. This follows national guidelines from the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).

✓The protection of each additional dose builds on the immune response to earlier doses. This is like climbing steps on a ladder towards full protection. Six doses are needed for full protection.

What about Reserve Component (RC) units that drill monthly?

✓Your unit commander, in coordination with the medical authority responsible for immunizations, will schedule your vaccinations in a timely manner.

If I have a health problem or adverse event after vaccination, what do I do?

✓First, if a health problem occurs following any vaccination, seek medical care to take care of your immediate health problem! If your symptoms persist, you or your provider may contact the DoD Clinical Call Center at **866.210.6469**. Then follow the information below to file a report with the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). We are committed to giving you the best care, no matter what caused the problem.

What about long-term side effects?

✓ This vaccine has been used for over 35 years. Multi-year studies found no patterns of long-term health problems due to anthrax vaccination. A vaccine, like any medicine, could possibly cause serious problems. The risk of anthrax vaccine causing serious harm, or death, is extremely small.

When do I file a VAERS report?

✓ Adverse events after vaccination are reported to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). VAERS forms are available at **www.vaers.org** or call **800.822.7967**. Healthcare workers and vaccine recipients are encouraged to report any severe events that require medical treatment and/or interfere with work or recreation. DoD requires VAERS reporting by healthcare workers

I'm in the Reserves or National Guard. If I have an adverse event, can I go to a military hospital or clinic?

✓ Adverse events after military-directed vaccinations are in "line-of-duty" (LOD). Some RC members may seek medical care from their private physicians, while others may seek medical care at a local military Medical Treatment Facility (MTF).

✓ Those who seek treatment for an adverse event related to an official immunization will be treated. Any necessary line-of-duty (LOD) documents shall be completed after the person is treated. If you see a NON-military provider, be sure to notify your commander for the proper paperwork for an LOD or Notice of Eligibility determination.

✓ Evaluation or treatment will not be denied or delayed, pending a line-of-duty determination.

✓ For civilian health services outside a military Medical Treatment Facility call: **888.MHS.MMSO (888.647.6676).**

What if I'm pregnant?

✓ Good medical practice defers vaccination during pregnancy, unless clearly needed. If you are unsure if you are pregnant, you may request a pregnancy test from your medical provider.

✓ A study at Fort Stewart found that vaccinated women get pregnant and give birth at the same rate as unvaccinated women. Outcomes of pregnancies are comparable in vaccinated and unvaccinated women.

✓ A study suggests that anthrax vaccine may be linked with birth defects if given during pregnancy. Pregnant women should not be vaccinated against anthrax unless the potential benefits of vaccination outweigh the potential risk to the fetus.

Anthrax Vaccine Immunization Program

➲ *For information about vaccine or policy,*
Military Vaccine (MILVAX) Agency:
Websites: **www.anthrax.mil www.vaccines.mil**
E-Mail: **vaccines@amedd.army.mil** Toll-Free: **877.GET.VACC**

➲ *For medical advice about your vaccination,*
DoD Vaccine Clinical Call Center: Toll-Free: **866.210.6469**

➲ *For clinical consultation or exemption assistance,*
DoD Vaccine Healthcare Centers: www.vhcinfo.org
E-Mail: **askvhc@amedd.army.mil** Phone: **202.782.0411**

➲ **CDC National Immunization Hotline: 800.232.2522**

To Civilian Healthcare Providers: If a Reservist or Active Duty Service Member presents to you for a condition that may be an adverse event caused by a military vaccination, please provide appropriate care. For authorization and payment, contact t**he Military Treatment Facility (MTF)** where the member is enrolled, OR contact t**he Military Medical Support Office (MMSO, 888-647-6676)** if not enrolled to an MTF.

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT ANTHRAX

16 Dec 2005

The FDA recently issued its Final Order, finding anthrax vaccine safe and effective, regardless of route of exposure.
The FDA reviewed all scientific data and extensive public comments.

For more information:
www.anthrax.mil
www.vaccines.mil
vaccines@amedd.army.mil
877-GET-VACC, DSN 761-4245

FACTS ABOUT ANTHRAX, THE DISEASE

- Caused by bacteria called *Bacillus anthracis*
- Causes three types of disease (skin, gastrointestinal, inhalation)
- Anthrax spores make a lethal weapon
- You can inhale anthrax spores and not even know it
- Inhalation anthrax is the most deadly form of anthrax (over 99% fatal if untreated)

FACTS ABOUT ANTHRAX VACCINE

- Protected 92.5% of vaccinated mill workers
- Licensed by the FDA since Nov 1970
- Manufactured by BioPort in Michigan
- Cannot cause anthrax disease
- Given in a series of six doses: 0, 2, 4 weeks, 6, 12, and 18 months, with annual boosters to sustain immunity
- Six doses are needed for full protection. Each dose builds on the immune response from earlier doses.
- Without vaccination, you would be more vulnerable to anthrax infection

We understand this vaccine very well. Civilian medical organizations such as the CDC, FDA and Institute of Medicine have studied, reviewed and endorsed anthrax vaccine. They agree it is a safe and effective vaccine.

➢ On 15 December 2005, the Food and Drug Administration issued a Final Order. FDA again found anthrax vaccine to be safe and effective in preventing anthrax, regardless of route of exposure.

➢ While awaiting completion of a DoD policy review, anthrax vaccinations continue under the same conditions as during 2005, with an option to refuse.

➢ You may refuse anthrax vaccination at this time. There will be no penalty or loss of entitlement for refusing anthrax vaccination.

➢ Your military and civilian leaders continue to strongly recommend anthrax vaccination for your personal protection and for the sake of your mission.

Information about anthrax vaccine...

➢ The FDA licensed dosing schedule is 0-2-4 weeks, 6-12-18 months, plus annual boosters. Given subcutaneously.

➢ Injection site reactions, like burning, redness and swelling are common. Local reactions occur in 30% of men and 60% of women. Anthrax vaccine can cause a lump under the skin where injected. These lumps can last a few weeks, but they go away on their own.

➢ Systemic reactions, such as headaches or a fever, are less common than injection-site reactions. These occur at rates similar to other vaccines: 5% to 35%.

➢ Report adverse events to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). Get VAERS forms at **www.vaers.org** or call **800.822.7967.** Healthcare workers and vaccine recipients are encouraged to report via VAERS any severe events within 30 days of vaccination, that require medical treatment and/or interfere with work or recreation. DoD requires healthcare workers report adverse events that cause hospitalization or loss of work for 24 hours or more.

Who should not get anthrax vaccine?

✓ Some people should not get anthrax vaccine or should wait:

- People who had a serious allergic reaction or other serious reaction to a prior dose
- People who have a moderate or severe illness
- Women who are pregnant
- People with a possible history of latex sensitivity
- HIV-infected and immune-suppressed people
- People who had Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS)
- People who recovered from anthrax infection

✓ You can request an evaluation for a medical exemption from your provider. If you or your provider need assistance with medical exemption questions, the Vaccine Healthcare Center (VHC) is available for consultation services or referral for a second opinion.

What side effects can I expect?

✓ A burning sensation may occur immediately after getting anthrax vaccine and can last about a minute.

✓ Like other vaccines, anthrax vaccine may cause soreness, redness, itching, and swelling at the injection site.

✓ Up to 30% of men and 60% of women report small local reactions, but these reactions usually last only a few days. A lump at the site occurs commonly, up to 50% of the time, lasting for a few weeks.

✓ Larger injection-site reactions occur in about 1% to 4% of vaccinees.

✓ Beyond the injection site, 5% to 35% may notice such symptoms as muscle or joint aches, headaches, rashes, chills, low-grade fever or nausea. These symptoms usually go away in less than a week.

✓ Any vaccine, like any prescription drug, can cause serious reactions including those requiring hospitalization or medical care. Severe allergic reactions occur less than once per 100,000 doses.

How many shots will I get?

✓ The FDA-licensed schedule for anthrax vaccine is 6 doses given over 18 months: 0-2-4 weeks, 6-12-18 months, plus annual boosters. Six doses are needed for full protection. Do not get a dose earlier than your due date. If your risk of exposure to anthrax changes, we will

This is an entry-level resource.
If you want more info, go to **www.anthrax.mil**
or call 1-877-GET VACC.